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THE ARCH, CHICAGO
SCULPTURE BY C. J. MULLIGAN

THE EDITOR

When the history of American celebrations and festivals shall be written, eighteen hundred and ninety-nine will mark its real beginnings, for, for the first time, have the plans been designed and the work carried out by artists.

We have spoken of the advances made in municipal art improvement, and now that the Dewey celebration in New York and the autumn festival in Chicago are over, we find much to record and commend. Distinct steps in advance have been made, which will be followed by others, until in a few years we shall have an expectant public and a trained body of experts willing and eager to see their expectations abundantly and artistically realized. In New York, thanks to Mr. Charles R. Lamb and the National Sculpture Society, the decorations were in keeping with a hero's victorious return. So effective was the triumphal arch that there has been a public demand for its preservation in enduring materials. It would be a fine thing—speaking generally—to have some monument to recall the brilliancy and the emotions of such a national expression of gratitude as the Dewey celebration evoked. It would beautify a city with ornaments of historic import. Such motives bring out the best results, and are typical of the times. They are a historic record of deeds expressed through



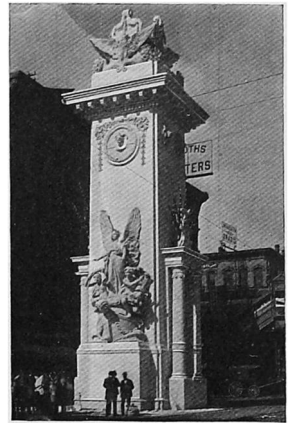
PYLON MARKING NORTH END
OF COURT OF HONOR
CHICAGO
SCULPTURE BY L. TAFT

the arts of their day. The Arch of Titus was chosen as a prototype, and it was certainly a safe thing to do. Rome was the home of triumphs, and her monuments are the best we have. In the future, if time were granted, it might be advisable to study some form of monument that would typify our feelings in a more original manner. Barring the spirit and incident in the sculptures, it might have been a Roman work. Dewey is an American; he was not a conqueror, but a defender of liberty. He represents the best in our nineteenth century of progress—not the imperialism of a Cæsar. Our art should express in all its forms our own characteristic feelings, and it is a pity that we should borrow the art of the classic age.

In Chicago there was some attempt at a more original treatment, and it was, all things considered, a more than qualified success. To Mr. Jas. Gamble Rogers,

architect, is due the credit of by far the most artistic scheme of decorations the city has ever seen. The modeling by Taft & Mulligan on the pylons and arch were good, and mark the beginning of artistic sculpture for festival decorations. The limit of time made results almost a physical impossibility; but the groups were successes, and were the delight of multitudes.

Such object lessons do more for public art than volumes of printed matter or hours of oratory. A beginning has been made, and improvement all along the line is what we may expect in the future. These celebrations demonstrate the fact that there are men and artists qualified to do excellent things in public decorations, and their services will be required in the future. Never again, it is hoped, will such so-called decorations be seen as have disfigured our celebrations in the past. We have made a very good beginning, and each new occasion ought to add to the opportunity and its realization.



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